

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 041764 TOSEC 040151

EXDIS FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE ACTING SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM - SCHEDULING OF HIGH-VISIBILITY MEETINGS WITH THE SOVIETS

(S/S NO. 7603635)

1. THE PROBLEM. WE ARE GETTING COMPLAINTS FROM YOUR COLLEAGUES ABOUT THE DECISION TO POSTPONE CABINET-LEVEL MEETINGS WITH THE SOVIETS OR OTHERWISE REDUCE THEIR VISIBILITY.

2. BACKGROUND. ON FEBRUARY 11 YOU MADE THE FOLLOWING DECISIONS ABOUT STEPS WE COULD TAKE TO DISPLAY OUR DISPLEASURE WITH SOVIET ACTIONS IN ANGOLA.

-- POSTPONE THE 1976 SESSION OF THE US-USSR JOINT COMMERCIAL COMMISSION UNTIL THE SECOND HALF OF 1976. TREASURY AND COMMERCE WANTED TO HOLD IT IN APRIL.

-- ASK EITHER ZARB OR SEAMANS TO DROP OFF THE DELEGATION
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TO THE MARCH 15 MEETING OF THE US-USSR JOINT ENERGY

COMMITTEE IN MOSCOW.

-- ASK SECRETARY HILLS TO DELAY THE MEETING OF THE JOINT HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE, WHICH INVOLVES HER ATTENDANCE, UNTIL THE SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR.

3. WE HAVE CONVEYED YOUR DECISIONS TO THE OTHER DEPARTMENTS, BUT IN ALL THREE CASES YOUR COLLEAGUES HAVE RESISTED, CLAIMING THAT POSTPONEMENT MEANS CANCELLATION THIS YEAR IN VIEW OF CROWDED SCHEDULES IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR.

--SECRETARY SIMON CALLED ME AND URGED THAT WE PROCEED IN APRIL.

--ZARB DOUBTS THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD GET THE MESSAGE IF EITHER HE OR SEAMANS DROPS OUT OF THE MARCH MEETING AND SUGGESTED POSTPONING OR CANCELLING THE MEETING AS AN ALTERNATIVE. I AGREE WITH ZARB THAT THE SOVIETS ARE UNLIKELY TO GET A SIGNAL IF EITHER ONE DROPS OFF. I SUGGEST THEREFORE THAT EITHER BOTH SHOULD ATTEND OR THAT WE POSTPONE THE MEETING.

--EUR BELIEVES THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD GET THE MESSAGE, PARTICULARLY IF ZARB DROPS OFF, SINCE HE IS CHAIRMAN OF US SIDE AND HE HAS BEEN IN CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIS SOVIET COUNTERPART. EUR NOTES ALSO THAT ENERGY AGREEMENT PROVIDES FOR JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING ONCE A YEAR. THE LAST ONE WAS HELD OCTOBER 1974 AND THE SECOND (CURRENT) MEETING HAS BEEN DELAYED SEVERAL TIMES BY OUR SIDE. POSTPONEMENT OF THE MEETING NOW WOULD VERY LIKELY MEAN ALMOST A TWO-YEAR DELAY SINCE THE FIRST SESSION AND WOULD OPEN US TO SOVIET CHARGES THAT WE ARE NOT CARRYING OUT ONE OF THE SUMMIT AGREEMENTS.

--MRS. HILLS IS RELUCTANT TO DROP HER PLANS TO AIM FOR A MAY MEETING, ALTHOUGH NO DATES HAVE BEEN AGREED TO WITH THE SOVIETS. SHE SAYS HER SCHEDULE WOULD NOT PERMIT A MEETING IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS;

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A. THAT YOU AUTHORIZE ME TO CONVEY TO YOUR COLLEAGUES THAT I HAVE BROUGHT THEIR CONCERNS TO YOUR ATTENTION AND THAT, IN VIEW OF ANGOLA, YOU STILL BELIEVE THAT:

----SECRETARY SIMON SHOULD POSTPONE THE JOINT COMMERCIAL COMMISSION MEETING.

----APPROVE DISAPPROVE

AND THAT SECRETARY HILLS SHOULD DELAY PLANNING FOR THE
HOUSING JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING UNTIL THE SECOND HALF
OF 1976, IN FULL AWARENESS THAT HER SCHEDULE MAY NOT

PERMIT THE ACCEPTANCE OF DATES PROPOSED BY THE SOVIETS.

----APPROVE DISAPPROVE

B. BUT THAT REGARDING THE MARCH 15 ENERGY MEETING

----APPROVE DISAPPROVE

ALTERNATIVELY, THAT ZARB DROP OFF BUT LET THE MEETING
GO AHEAD AS PLANNED.

----APPROVE DISAPPROVE

ALTERNATIVELY, THAT WE POSTPONE THE JOINT ENERGY
COMMITTEE MEETING.

----APPROVE DISAPPROVE

4. CLEARED: EUR, HARTMAN. INGERSOLL

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